

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-92 without prejudice or disclaimer and add claims 93-100 as follows:

1-92 (canceled)

93. (new) An automatically-activated wireless bar code symbol reading system for use in a work environment and having an operational mode and a sleep mode, said system comprising:

(A) a wireless hand-supportable bar code symbol reader in two-way RF communication with a base station operably connected to a host system, by way of an RF-based wireless data communication link having a predetermined RF communication range over which two-way communication of data packets can occur, said wireless hand-supportable bar code reader including

(1) a hand-supportable housing,

(2) a battery disposed within said hand-supportable housing, for supplying electrical power to electrical-energy consuming components employed therewithin.

(3) a bar code symbol reading mechanism, disposed in said hand-supportable housing, for automatically and automatically reading a bar code symbol on an object and producing a symbol character data string representative of said read bar code symbol,

(4) a first RF-based transceiver chipset, disposed in said hand-supportable housing, for transmitting data packets corresponding to said produced symbol character data string, to said base station and for subsequent transmission to said host system, and

(5) a first microcontroller, operably associated with said first RF-based transceiver chipset, for controlling the operation of said first RF-based transceiver chipset; and

(B) said base station installable within a work environment and including

(1) a base station housing,

(2) a second RF-based transceiver chipset, disposed within said base station housing, for receiving data packets corresponding to said symbol character data strings transmitted from said first RF-based transceiver chipset, and

(3) a second microcontroller, operably associated with said second RF-based transceiver chipset, for controlling the operation of the second RF-based transceiver chipset;

wherein said first and second RF-based transceiver chipsets enable said RF-based wireless data communication link between said wireless hand-supportable bar code reader and said base station;

wherein said first and second RF-based transceiver chipsets cooperate to enable the communication of data packets over said RF-based wireless data communication link, during said operational mode;

wherein said second RF-based transceiver includes means for automatically generating and transmitting a reference signal to said first RF-based transceiver circuit over said RF-based wireless data communication link;

wherein said first RF-based transceiver circuit includes means for automatically receiving said reference signal and detecting the strength of said reference signal; and

wherein when said system enters said sleep mode, then said first and second RF-based chipsets and said first and second microcontrollers associated therewith are automatically deactivated and said RF data communication link is terminated to conserve said electrical power within said wireless hand-supportable bar code reader, and

wherein, when said system re-enters its operational mode, then said first and second RF chipsets and said first and second microcontrollers associated therewith are automatically reactivated and said RF data communication link is re-established to resume communication between said wireless hand-supportable bar code symbol reader and said base station.

94. (new) The automatically-activated wireless laser scanning bar code symbol reading system of claim 93, wherein said wireless hand-supportable bar code symbol reader further comprises a battery power level detection circuit for automatically detecting the available electrical power remaining within said wireless hand-supportable bar code symbol reader, and when said power level is detected as falling below a predetermined threshold, automatically generating a control signal which causes said system to enter said sleep mode.

95. (new) The automatically-activated wireless laser scanning bar code symbol reading system of claim 94, wherein said wireless hand-supportable bar code symbol reader further comprises a

manually-actuatable switch disposed on said hand-supportable housing for causing said system to exit said sleep mode and re-enter said operational mode.

96. (new) The automatically-activated wireless laser scanning bar code symbol reading system of claim 93, wherein said base station further comprises: a cradle portion adapted for receiving said hand-supportable housing.

97. (new) The automatically-activated wireless laser scanning bar code symbol reading system of claim 93, wherein said reference signal is a heartbeat-type signal generated from said second RF-based transceiver circuit.

98. (new) The automatically-activated wireless laser scanning bar code symbol reading system of claim 93, which further comprises an indicator, integrated with said hand-supportable housing, for indicating each instance of when a bar code symbol is read by said laser-scanning bar code symbol reading mechanism and a symbol character data string representative thereof is produced.

99. (new) The automatically-activated wireless laser scanning bar code symbol reading system of claim 93, which further comprises an objection detection subsystem disposed within said hand-supportable housing and including infrared (IR) signal transmission/receiving circuitry for automatically detecting said object within an object detection field definable relative to said hand-supportable housing.

100. (new) The automatically-activated wireless laser scanning bar code symbol reading system of claim 93, which further comprises an objection detection subsystem disposed within said hand-supportable housing, and including low-power non-visible laser beam signaling mechanism for automatically detecting said object within an object detection field definable relative to said hand-supportable housing.